

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING TOOLBOX



Co-funded by
the European Union

OUR MOTIVATION

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING PRINCIPLES & METHODOLOGIES

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING RESEARCH RESULTS

INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING TOOLS

THE SKILLSET

THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

THE NEXUS: LEARNING, SUSTAINABILITY, INTERDISCIPLINARITY

THE VALIDATION SYSTEM



OUR MOTIVATION



INTRODUCTION

inclusive and diverse learning systems that are carefully adapted to each individual's unique potentials, capacities, and motivations. It's about recognizing that every young person learns differently and has their own strengths to bring to the table. Crucially, this learning system must also incorporate a deep understanding of Sustainability and Green skills. We believe that learning should extend beyond traditional subjects to equip the next generation with the knowledge and abilities needed to care for our planet and build a sustainable future. To achieve this, we must focus on bridging formal and non-formal learning, creating seamless pathways that connect classroom knowledge with real-world experiences, community engagement, and practical skill development.

For us, education isn't just about what you learn in a classroom; it's about how we live. It should shape our actions, fostering our ability to adapt to a changing world, include everyone in our communities, and genuinely care for the world around us. We see learning as a continuous journey of growing together, working collaboratively to create a future that is equitable and environmentally responsible – a future that truly belongs to all of us. This requires us to break down the barriers between traditional schooling and experiential learning, recognizing the value of both in shaping well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

To achieve this, we must ensure inclusive learning is accessible for all youngsters, effectively preparing them for the complex challenges of tomorrow. This also means we need to motivate educators to embrace diverse learning styles and help youngsters discover sustainable pathways. Furthermore, we must equip educators with the tools and strategies to effectively integrate non-formal learning methods into their teaching, and to recognize and validate the skills and knowledge gained through non-formal experiences.

Ultimately, we believe in proactively preparing learning environments and educators to be inherently inclusive and to work hand-in-hand to cultivate a truly sustainable future for generations to come, by fostering a holistic approach that values all forms of learning.

[Back to index](#)



Co-funded by
the European Union



SL PRINCIPLES & METHODOLOGIES



SL RESEARCH RESULTS

Tips and Tricks for Educators, Teachers, and Youth Workers

The following pages show the recommendations from the research done in the Sustainable Learning - Erasmus+ project; KA220-YOU - Cooperation Partnerships in Youth 2023 – 2026.

Through our research, we have sought to shed light on the basic elements of the phenomenon of the "holistic learning process". In order to do so, we have searched into the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

This report is designed to support educators, teachers, and youth workers in transforming education systems to be more inclusive, sustainable, and future-oriented. It provides a comprehensive overview of key strategies and actionable recommendations for enhancing learning experiences.

Topics include personalized education, sustainability integration, experiential learning, and non-formal learning validation. Through practical examples and guidance, this report aims to empower professionals in the education sector to implement meaningful, student-centered practices that address the diverse needs of today's learners and prepare them for tomorrow's challenges.



Co-funded by
the European Union



SL RESEARCH RESULTS

I. Enhancing Autonomy and Choice for Young Learners

1. Offer Freedom and Variety in Activities

- Empower youngsters to co-create their learning paths.
- Example: Allow youngsters to choose between developing a podcast on climate change, creating an art installation, or writing a blog series as a sustainability project.
- Why: When learners choose projects that align with their interests, they take ownership and deepen their commitment.

2. Encourage Ownership and Responsibility

- Guide youngsters to set personal learning goals and track progress.
- Example: Students maintain a “learning journal” to reflect on weekly goals, successes, and challenges.
- Why: Builds intrinsic motivation and develops planning and self-assessment skills.

3. Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

- Ensure learning environments are inclusive, respectful, and responsive.
- Example: Introduce circle-time or peer mediation groups where all voices are heard.
- Why: Emotional safety encourages risk-taking in learning and deeper engagement.

4. Tailor Learning Paths to Individual Needs

- Use competency-based learning and digital tools to adapt content.
- Example: A student struggling in math can use a gamified app to reinforce concepts while others advance to project work.
- Why: Flexibility ensures no learner is left behind and supports various learning speeds.

5. Integrate Fun and Meaningful Learning

- Use games, storytelling, and real-world scenarios.
- Example: Role-play a UN climate summit or create a board game about waste management.
- Why: Fun and relevance enhance memory retention and engagement.





SL RESEARCH RESULTS

II. Effective Planning and Design of Learning Environments

1. Clear Structure with Flexibility

- Equip educators with adaptable tools and frameworks.
- Example: A flexible template for project-based learning that can be applied to themes from biodiversity to urban development.
- Why: Structure ensures clarity; flexibility enables customization.

2. Celebrate Success to Enhance Motivation

- Use ongoing milestones, peer recognition, and rewards.
- Example: Award digital badges for completing sustainability challenges like a zero-waste week.
- Why: Recognition builds confidence and celebrates progress, not just results.

3. Adaptability to Individual and Group Needs

- Differentiate instruction based on group dynamics and individual preferences.
- Example: A class exploring clean energy might be split into teams focusing on wind, solar, or hydropower, each using different media.
- Why: Group-specific strategies foster engagement and collaborative learning.

4. Empower Educators with Flexibility and Tools

- Provide training, autonomy, and peer networks.
- Example: Establish educator learning communities focused on sustainability education.
- Why: Empowered educators are more creative and responsive.

5. Integrate Reflection and Validation Systems

- Include self-reflection and feedback as integral learning components.
- Example: Use digital portfolios where youngsters post project reflections, peer feedback, and learning artifacts.
- Why: Encourages lifelong learning habits and personal growth.





SL RESEARCH RESULTS

III. Meeting Learning Requirements of the 21st Century

1. Incorporate Experiential and Active Learning

- Combine theoretical learning with practical projects.
- Example: Start a school composting program tied to biology curriculum.
- Why: Hands-on experiences help youngsters retain knowledge and apply skills.

2. Promote Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments

- Use accessible content and support services.
- Example: Multimedia content for students with dyslexia or guided sessions with learning coaches.
- Why: Inclusivity improves outcomes for all learners.

3. Integrate Theory with Practice

- Link curriculum topics with real-life applications.
- Example: A geometry unit could involve measuring and redesigning classroom spaces for energy efficiency.
- Why: Practical application builds relevance and deeper understanding.

4. Use Learning Coaches for Personalization

- Assign adult mentors to students.
- Example: A coach meets bi-weekly with youngsters to adjust learning paths and set personal challenges.
- Why: Personalized support enhances engagement and addresses barriers.

5. Encourage Peer-to-Peer and Collaborative Learning

- Promote teamwork and knowledge sharing.
- Example: Mixed-age student teams work on a school-wide sustainability fair.
- Why: Collaboration fosters communication and problem-solving skills.





SL RESEARCH RESULTS

IV. Strengthening Management Support

1. Prioritize Sustainability Institutionally

- Make sustainability a central value in policies and practice.
- Example: Develop a school sustainability plan with student input.
- Why: Whole-system alignment ensures lasting impact.

2. Invest in Educator Development

- Provide training and recognition.
- Example: Teachers attend a summer course on eco-pedagogy and get certified as 'Green Ambassadors.'
- Why: Trained educators can implement and advocate for sustainability.

3. Allocate Time and Resources for Change

- Protect time for innovation and experimentation.
- Example: One day per term is dedicated to staff-led innovation labs.
- Why: Time and support reduce burnout and encourage new approaches.

4. Support Collaboration Across Stakeholders

- Build partnerships with local organizations.
- Example: Partner with a local recycling company for workshops and internships.
- Why: External collaboration enriches learning and community engagement.

5. Ensure Management Alignment and Support

- Leadership visibly supports innovative practices.
- Example: School leaders join student-led sustainability projects or co-teach classes.
- Why: Role modeling builds credibility and trust.





SL RESEARCH RESULTS

V. Deepening the Focus on Sustainability

1. Integrate Sustainability in Every Organizational Domain

- Embed it across curriculum, operations, and staff roles.
- Example: Incorporate eco-audits into math and science lessons.
- Why: Whole-institution approach reinforces learning.

2. Leverage Local Challenges and Events

- Use community issues to frame learning.
- Example: Youngsters analyze air quality data in their neighborhood.
- Why: Local relevance enhances motivation and civic awareness.

3. Incorporate Game Elements in Learning

- Gamify learning processes.
- Example: A sustainability treasure hunt that teaches recycling habits.
- Why: Games increase engagement and retention.

4. Promote Systems Thinking and Interconnectivity

- Help learners connect the dots.
- Example: Youngsters explore the water-energy-food nexus in interdisciplinary projects.
- Why: Systems thinking builds future-ready, analytical minds.

5. Provide Educators with Support and Tools

- Equip educators with kits, lesson plans, and contacts.
- Example: A shared online repository of eco-project templates.
- Why: Resources accelerate implementation and reduce effort duplication.

6. Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Learning

- Encourage green entrepreneurship.
- Example: Youngsters design social enterprises like a bike repair shop or a school garden produce stand.
- Why: Builds creativity, responsibility, and real-world skills.





SL RESEARCH RESULTS

VI. Validation of Non-Formal Learning

1. Validation Systems for Non-Formal Learning

- Use digital portfolios and open badges to document competencies.
- Example: A student earns a badge for organizing a community cleanup project, tied to leadership and environmental action.

2. Green Skills Framework

- Define core competencies such as climate literacy, circular economy, and ethical decision-making.
- Example: Integrate composting projects with lessons on the circular economy.

3. Bridging Non-Formal and Formal Learning

- Use shared competence descriptors across settings.
- Example: A scouting eco-camp experience counts toward school credits under environmental science.

4. Assessment of Skills

- Diversify formats—use interviews, videos, projects.
- Example: A short video diary documenting a youngster's learning journey in a community garden.

5. Non-Formal Learning Methods

- Apply experiential, gamified, and peer-led methods.
- Example: Intergenerational learning circles where youth teach digital skills and elders share sustainable living tips.

[Back to index](#)





INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

Principles, values and differences in learning processes

*How many times educators have been faced with the **challenge of fully engaging every student**, each with their own unique characteristics and learning styles? We understand the importance of finding **approaches that go beyond traditional methods** and can stimulate curiosity while responding to each **individual's unique abilities**.*

*We are particularly convinced that the key competences that prepare youngsters for the challenges ahead can be effectively acquired and enhanced through **non-formal learning**.*

*In this chapter, we will explore the **meaning of non-formal and informal learning** and we give some suggestions on methodology.*

1. **What Non-Formal Learning Methodologies are?**

Non-formal learning refers to structured learning that takes place outside of the traditional, formal education system (such as schools and universities) and normally **outside a traditional formal setting**. It is **intentional and planned**, but does not follow a rigid curriculum or lead to formal qualifications in the same way. Instead, it often involves **activities that are practical, experiential, and participatory**. This does not mean that non-formal learning cannot exist in formal contexts. On the contrary, it is also a crucial component of a modern, holistic learning experience. Formal institutions like schools and universities are not just containers for formal learning. They are vibrant hubs where organized, non-formal learning opportunities are essential for developing well-rounded, skilled, and motivated individuals. The synergy between the rigid structure of the curriculum and the flexible, passion-driven nature of non-formal activities is what defines a truly great education today.

[Here](#) you can find a video about the characteristics of non-formal learning promoted by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre.

Non-formal learning became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning, whereas the concepts have to do with the extension of education and learning throughout life, non-formal learning is about acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions.

Main characteristics:

- Non-formal learning is an **intentional, structured** and **systematic** learning method.
- Non-formal learning is on **voluntary** basis.
- It is a **flexible** learning method in which content is adapted to the unique needs of the learner (or unique situations) in order to maximize learning.
- It is not in-formal education. It is **planned** and follows **learning theories**.
- Non-formal learning is more **learner centred** than most formal education methods.
- Non-formal learning methodologies use **active participation** and participants' **personal experiences**.





INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

- Participation and cooperation helps to build **group cohesion** and **reduce biases** between group members.
- Non-formal learning is **non-hierarchical**, and everyone can be learner and teacher.
- All the participants contribute with their experiences to the learning process ensuring their **personal interest** and **effective development** of the group.
- Non-formal learning uses **holistic approach**, where the learning is done by doing. It follows the principle of **head, heart and hands**.
- It furthers understanding of complex concepts, improves **problem solving skills** and stimulates **creativity** and aims to human rights education.
- **Non-formal learning can be evaluated**, using certificates based on self-assessment and evaluation.
- **Questions and conflicts** are regarded as fundamental learning resources, which can be addressed in a positive manner.
- Non-formal learning approach is a valid mechanism **to integrate disadvantaged groups into society**.

Examples of non-formal learning activities include:

- Workshops and training courses: Focused on specific skills or topics.
- Youth groups and clubs: Activities that promote social development, teamwork, and leadership.
- Volunteering and community service: Learning through active participation in society.
- Internships and apprenticeships: Gaining practical experience in a work setting.
- Arts and cultural programmes: Developing creativity, expression, and cultural awareness.
- Peer education: Learning from and with people of the same level.

And now, a short summary and exercise: Click [Here](#)

1. *What's Informal Learning?*

Informal learning, on the other hand, is learning that occurs spontaneously and unplanned, outside of any formal or non-formal educational structure. It is an ongoing process, often unintentional, that results from daily activities, experiences, and interactions.

Informal learning is achieved through a variety of ways, often unstructured and guided by the individual's interests and needs. Some of the most common methodologies include:

- **Self-directed learning:** The individual takes responsibility for their own learning, identifying their needs, setting goals, and choosing the most suitable resources and strategies.





INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

- **Experiential learning:** Learning occurs through direct experience, practice, and reflection on one's actions.
- **Social learning:** Interaction with others, such as colleagues, mentors, friends, or family, plays a fundamental role in the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
- **Situated learning:** Learning is closely linked to the context in which it occurs, allowing the individual to better understand the practical application of their knowledge.
- **Observation and imitation:** Learning by observing others and imitating their behaviors or actions.
- **Trial and error:** Acquiring knowledge through experimentation, making mistakes, and learning from them.
- **Autonomous reading and research:** Using books, articles, online resources, and other materials to acquire information independently.
- **Participation in communities of practice:** Interacting with groups of people who share similar interests or professions to learn and exchange knowledge.
- **Informal mentoring and coaching:** Receiving guidance and support from more experienced people in an unstructured way.

1. *Why is Non Formal Learning Useful for Youth Development?*

There are several key reasons why non-formal learning methods are particularly effective for young people:

Active involvement and motivation: As they are often based on **practical, experiential and participatory activities**, such as role-plays, group projects, simulations, art and sports activities, they capture young people's interest more effectively than passive lectures. 'Learning by doing' makes learning more dynamic and memorable.

Adaptability and flexibility: These methods can easily be **adapted to the interests, needs and learning styles of young people**. They often start from participants' life experiences, making the content more relevant and meaningful.

Development of soft skills: Non-formal learning promotes the development of **essential social and emotional skills**, such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, empathy, and leadership. These skills are vital for personal and professional success.



SL PRINCIPLES & METHODOLOGIES



INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

Learning in real-world contexts: Many non-formal activities **take place in real or simulated contexts** that reflect real-life situations, helping young people connect learning with the world around them.

Strengthening self-esteem and self-confidence: Success in practical activities and active participation in groups can boost young people's self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy. Non-formal learning provides a structured yet flexible approach. Recognising and valuing different types of learning can lead to a more **holistic and effective learning approach** for young people with diverse learning styles.





INFORMAL, NON FORMAL AND FORMAL LEARNING

Find out more...useful resources:

[Video on Teaching Methods for Inspiring the Students of the Future | Joe Ruhl | TEDxLafayette](#)

[Video explaining FORMAL, NON-FORMAL, INFORMAL LEARNING](#)

[Cedefop \(European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training\)](#): Cedefop offers numerous publications and resources on non-formal and informal learning methodologies, including studies, reports, and guidelines._

[European Commission - Education and Training](#): The Education and Training section of the European Commission website provides information on policies, programs, and initiatives related to non-formal and informal learning._

[EAEA \(European Association for the Education of Adults\)](#): EAEA is a European organization that promotes adult learning and offers resources, publications, and events on the topic of non-formal and informal learning._

[UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#): UIL focuses on lifelong learning and provides resources, research, and publications on non-formal and informal learning in various parts of the world._

[OECD \(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development\)](#): The OECD offers resources and publications on education and learning, including comparative analyses and best practices related to non-formal and informal learning.

[Back to index](#)





THE SKILLSET

The Skillset

In the project 'Sustainable Learning', we started from the following belief:

We envision a future where education truly empowers young people.

This means creating **inclusive and diverse learning systems** that are thoughtfully adapted to each individual's unique potential, capacities, and motivations. It's about recognizing that every young person learns in their own way and has their own strengths to contribute. Crucially, education must also include a deep understanding of sustainability and green skills.

From this foundation, we conducted research to determine which skills are essential for young people in the context of an inclusive learning environment, one that strengthens individuals and prepares them for the future.

We discovered that **it's not only green skills that matter, but also personal skills**, skills that help young people actually apply green thinking in real life. These personal skills are key in preparing youth for a future we can't fully predict one that requires adaptability, flexibility, and the ability to navigate constantly changing circumstances.

We developed two sets of skills **Personal Skills** and **Green Skills**

These are outlined in a [Skills Grid](#)

In this grid, you can find different skill categories, each broken down into specific, concrete abilities and knowledge.

The Skills Rubric

In total, 16 skills have been described, along with a set of related abilities.

For each skill, a rubric has been developed that outlines what should be achieved and what can be used as a basis for coaching—both for the educator and the young person, and across different levels.

For each ability we've defined five levels of development:

1. **Start:** what to do and prepare before starting
2. **Basic level:** just getting started with this skill; becoming aware of its importance and starting to apply the skill in real-life situations, with guidance. A youngster at a basic level should have practiced but still need coaching to perform independently.
3. **Advanced level:** A youngster gets an idea about how to master all the abilities belonging to this skill and receives coaching from the educator on his learning path. A youngster at this level can perform the skill independently in different situations.



THE SKILLSET

1. **Assessment level:** What does the youngster do to get the skill assessed. A youngster at this level can perform independently and reflect on his/her abilities and on the learning path.
2. **Validation:** The gained abilities and skills can be validated with an Open Badge in Badge Craft.

Here is an overview of the skills Rubrics personal skills_ And here is the skills rubric of the green skills.

[Back to index](#)



SL TOOLS



THE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Here we provide you with a **catalogue of practical activities based on non formal learning methodologies**. These activities are specifically designed to develop the competences of our Skillset, offering tools that transform learning into an active, participatory and, above all, effective experience, even for those who struggle with more conventional approaches.

Our aim is to provide you with the tools to **overcome learning difficulties** and heterogeneity in the learning environment, offering concrete strategies to motivate, engage with and develop each young person according to their potential.

The Sustainable Learning project has developed a **database of examples of Learning Activities** involving the use [the use of non-formal learning methodologies](#).

The database is structured on the basis of the project's Skillsgrid

The threads allows activities to be selected on the basis of the target skills and methodologies used

Some learning activities can be linked together in modular form in order to compose longer and more structured learning paths.

In the **database of Learning Activities** you can find the description of the activities, necessary tools, the objectives and the steps necessary to achieve them.



Co-funded by
the European Union



The Nexus: Learning, Sustainability, Interdisciplinarity

An educator or youth worker can introduce various sustainability topics to young learners, fostering environmental awareness and responsible behavior.

As educators, it's important to recognize that sustainability is a complex, multifaceted challenge that necessitates knowledge and perspectives from various disciplines. Issues like climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality require a **holistic understanding** that transcends any single field. By integrating insights from the **natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and economics**, we can develop a more comprehensive grasp of these interconnected problems. Addressing these challenges effectively demands innovative solutions that often lie outside the scope of individual disciplines; **interdisciplinary collaboration, therefore, is crucial in fostering creative and effective strategies**. Furthermore, sustainability education should emphasize **systems thinking**, helping learners understand the interactions and influences among different components within a system, be they natural, social, or economic. **This interdisciplinary approach equips youngsters with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle the complexities of real-world sustainability challenges in both their personal and professional lives.**

Here you can find some Examples of sustainability in different disciplines.

Useful Resources for Interdisciplinary Approaches to Sustainability Learning and Education:

- [Content and materials promoted by EU Commission about green education and learning for the green transition](#)
- [UNESCO ESD TOOLKIT](#)
- [UN Environment Programme \(UNEP\) offers content and programme for youth and education](#)
- [The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\): The SDGs themselves are inherently interdisciplinary, requiring collaboration across various fields to achieve them. The UN provides educational resources on the SDGs.](#)
- [National geographic explains how to combine sustainability and English language learning](#)
- [National geographic webinars on sustainability and learning](#)
- [Portal that reports interesting reflections and contents on how and why to include sustainability in school education](#)

[Back to index](#)





SL TOOLS



The Validation System

In the project 'Sustainable Learning' (from now on named SL) , youngsters get the chance to discover and develop their personal and green skills and to get recognition and acknowledgement for these skills. We will do this by issuing Open Badges for the gained skills. Open Badges are verifiable claims recognizing a person's achievements, competencies, talents, affiliations or aspirations.

Big question is: when does someone 'have' a skill and when does someone earn a badge for this skill? Every situation and training is different so we cannot formulate hard requirements for each badge.

In general we can say that someone masters a certain skill if he can use this skill in different situations and if the behavior associated with this skill has become a habit.

I.What is an Open Badge and Why is it useful?

An Open Badge is more than just a virtual sticker. A badge holds digital information about the issuer and the criteria for its delivery. In addition, it can hold evidence supporting the claim. This information makes Open Badges verifiable by others, like future employers in order to identify someone's competences.



Open Badges is based on work by the MacArthur Foundation and Mozilla Foundation. In 2010, the Open Badge movement was started. The software, [OpenBadges 2.0 specification](#), was developed by the IMS global consortium. It is open source and can be used on platforms to issue, earn and manage Open Badges. There are many platforms that use this software.

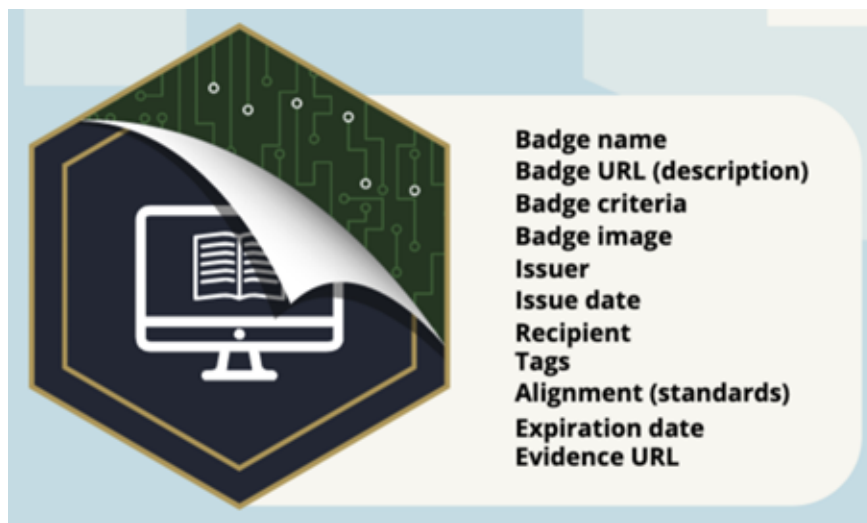
Open Badges, developed by Mozilla Foundation, are visual tokens of achievement, affiliation, authorization, or other trust relationship shareable across the web.



Co-funded by
the European Union



The Validation System



To find out more about badges' usefulness [Badge Wiki](#) is a great page to explore if you want to know more about Open Badges.

2. Structure, content and visualization of an Open Badge

Open Badges always follow the same structure. There is always a main competence, with which an Open Badge is connected. The Badge Name shows the specific field in which knowledge has been gained. This goes along with some criteria for awarding the Open Badge to the individuals and maybe some other additional information.



Digital Open Badges represent a more detailed picture than a CV or CV, as they can be presented in ever-changing combinations, creating an ever-evolving picture of a person's lifelong learning. They represent skills, knowledge or achievements that a person has acquired in their personal and professional life. Each Open Badge shows:

- WHO released the badge,
- to WHO and
- WHAT did someone do to get this badge





The Validation System

Regarding the visualization and display of Open Badges, an important feature is that the Open Badge holder can store all the acquired competences in one place. Unlike certificates, where you have several documents (high school diploma, course certificates, etc.). Open Badges, since it is a digital tool and system, can store all the evidence of acquired skills and competences in one place. It is easy to store on one hand and easy to compare and show what skills and achievements you have on the other. Additionally, as it is stored online, one can share the information on websites, blogs, social media profiles, online portfolios and CVs, therefore it can directly be shared with the benefit either to connect with potential collaborators, finding a (new) job or simply to make your own skills, achievements and knowledge visible

3. Instruction for educators & organizations

3.1 Badgecraft & Badge Wallet

For the Sustainable Learning project we chose BadgeCraft as the platform for the badge collections for the following reasons:

- BadgeCraft has its origins in another Erasmus+ project and has translations in many languages.
- It has a user-friendly app for badge earners, the Badge Wallet. With this app, earners can upload evidence and keep their badges stored. From here they can display them on social media, send them in a text message or email them.
- BadgeCraft shares the ideals for Open Recognition of Life Long Learning and is not expensive to use.

Visit www.badgecraft.eu for more information about the platform.





The Validation System

With this QR code you get access to the skills set. You can import the skills set in your own Badge Craft account. When you have imported these skills, you can give your youngster access to see the skills and to earn the skills.

3.2 Creating an account on Badge Craft

Before you start working with Open Badges as an organisation, you should create an organisational account on an Open Badges Platform.

How to register your organization and how to create an account in BadgeCraft, is explained in this user's Guide of Badgecraft: (<https://badgecraft.github.io/badgecraft/2021.09.27.Badgecraft.users.guide.pdf>)

3.3 Skill Set Sustainable Learning

For the project Sustainable Learning, we have created a badge collection of personal skills and green (sustainable) skills. You can find an overview of the created skill sets here (put link to the skills chapter). There is also an overview of the different levels of working on a skill and gaining a skill. (put link to Skills rubric)

Under each key skill, you can find abilities. A youngster can earn a badge for each ability and when he has mastered all the abilities of a specific key skill, he can earn the 'superbadge' of this skill.

For example:

Superbadge: COMMUNICATION.

In order to earn this superbadges, you first have to earn the abilities that are part of the skill 'communication':

1. Verbal & Nonverbal Expression
2. Active Listening & Understanding
3. Written Communication
4. Social & Interpersonal Abilities
5. Persuasion & Public Speaking





The Validation System

3.4. Explanation to youngsters

In order to explain the youngster about Open Badges there are some materials which are helpful and you can use the texts and graphics found in the SL toolbox to explain what Open Badges are, what use they have during the activities and to help youngsters getting started. There is animation available which explains what Open Badges are and what you can do with it. There is also an infographic to explain the different stakeholders and ways to use Open Badges.



An another good source to learn about open badges is Share the BADGE website which also provides materials in different languages.





The Validation System

3.5 How to connect Badge Craft to your existing validation system?

Within the project Sustainable Learning, we are going to work with Badge Craft and pilot with the developed Badges in Badgecraft. During and mainly after the pilot you have to decide if and how you want to continue with validation through Open Badges.

Choosing to validate skills through Open Badges offers organizations a powerful tool to recognize and make visible learning that happens in informal, non-formal, and formal settings. With platforms like BadgeCraft, learning experiences can be captured and validated in a flexible way — one that resonates with young people, volunteers, professionals, and other learners.

However, implementing badges is more than just adopting a new technical system. The true value of badges depends on how well they are integrated into the existing practices, vision, and validation structures of your organization. How do the badges align with what you already do? How do you ensure they are clear, credible, and meaningful — both for the learner and the organization? And how do you maintain the quality of assessment and evidence?

By intentionally connecting BadgeCraft with your existing validation system (such as rubrics, assessment forms, portfolios, or certificates), you can make badges both meaningful and workable. The steps underneath will guide you step-by-step in approaching that integration thoughtfully. Whether you are a school, community center, youth organization, or cultural institution: the strength of badges lies in their credibility, recognizability, and alignment with your day-to-day practice.





The Validation System

The steps:

Step 1 – Analyze Your Current Validation System

Goal: Map out your current approach to skill validation.

- Which skills are currently being validated?
- How is it currently determined whether someone has mastered a skill? (rubrics, assessments, observations, evidence?)
- Who does the validation (professionals, peers, automatic systems)?
- Are there levels or certification stages (e.g., beginner - advanced)?

Output: Overview of existing validation criteria, assessment methods, and terminology.

Step 2 – Identify Which Skills to Convert into Badges

Goal: Select which skills to validate using BadgeCraft.

- Choose concrete skills that fit a badge-based approach.
- Make sure each skill is clearly defined, measurable, and relevant for users.
- Decide whether to use different levels or tiers per skill.

Output: List of skills (and levels, if applicable) to be issued as badges.

Step 3 – Develop Badge Profiles in BadgeCraft

Goal: Create badges based on your existing system.

For each badge, include:

- Title & description of the skill
- Criteria: What must someone show or do?
- Evidence: What must the applicant submit?
- Assessment: Who approves and how?
- Use your existing rubrics as the basis, but adapt them to badge-friendly language.
- Consider your audience: youth-friendly wording for learners vs. clarity for educators.

Output: Fully developed badge profiles in BadgeCraft.





The Validation System

Step 4 – Link the Badges to Your Internal Process

Goal: Ensure alignment with your existing workflow.

- Define where and when badges are requested and issued in your learning trajectory.
- Let assessors use your current rubrics, now translated into badge criteria.
- Make sure the required evidence aligns with your usual validation process (portfolios, tasks, observations).
- Match the badge assessment process to your internal quality or recognition frameworks.

Output: A badge process that fits naturally within your existing programs.

Step 5 – Test and Adjust

Goal: Pilot the first badges with real users and assessors.

- Let a group of learners apply for badges.
- Have assessors evaluate and share their experience.
- Ask learners: Was it clear? Accessible? Motivating?
- Ask assessors: Does it align with what you normally do? Is anything missing?

Output: Insights and adjustments to content, wording, or workflow.

Step 6 – Communicate & Train

Goal: *Make sure everyone involved understands how it works.*

- Inform your team about how BadgeCraft and the badge system function.
- Train facilitators and assessors in how to assess according to the platform criteria.
- Create user-friendly explanations for young people: how it works and what it means for them.

Output: Clear instructions and organizational buy-in.





SL TOOLS



The Validation System

Step 7 – Monitor and Embed

Goal: Ensure quality and long-term integration of the badge process.

- Regularly evaluate: Are badges awarded fairly, consistently, and meaningfully?
- Monitor usage, motivation, and feedback from learners.
- Make adjustments where needed and develop new badges if relevant.
- Integrate badges structurally into your learning paths or programs.

Output: A sustainable, recognized badge system embedded in your organization.



Co-funded by
the European Union



The Validation System

4. Instruction for youngsters

In the project 'Sustainable Learning' as a youngsters you will get the chance to discover and develop your skills and to get recognition for them.

4.1. How do I earn Open Badges?

In the activities you'll get the chance to discover and develop your personal and green skills. For these skills you can earn badges so you'll be able to show others, like future employers or educators, what skills you have.

Badges can be earned through an app, the Badge Wallet. As soon as you have put this app on your phone, you can start using it. The organization where you are learning has prepared badges for you to earn. Each badge consists of tasks, for each task you can write a text or upload a file that must be approved by the organization. When that is done, you have automatically earned the badge and it will remain in the Badge Wallet. From the Badge Wallet you can share the badges by email, WhatsApp or social media. The organization can also give you a certificate of one or more badges that you have earned.





The Validation System

4.2. What should I do?

- Make sure you have a proper email address, with which you want to apply later
- Download the BadgeWallet app on your phone and register yourself
- Scan the QR code of your organization, so that you can access the badges
- Start the challenge by clicking on a badge in the 'projects' folder
- Don't have a working phone? You can also register via www.badgecraft.eu
- Read the task of the challenge of a Badge and hand in evidence of your development in this topic.
- Once you've uploaded the evidence, you can click on the pink 'ask evidence verification' button.
- Your educator will see your evidence and decide if it is sufficient enough to earn the badge.

[Back to index](#)



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Netherlands Jeugdinstituut. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

